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ABSTRACT

Offered in this guide are ideas to aid program planners and discussion participants who wish to develop dialogue centered on environmental problems, particularly those issues to be considered by the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. A background is established that Americans need to begin thinking about the international dimensions of the environmental crisis, about the role the United Nations is now playing and should play in the future, and about how and to what extent their own government should participate. To this end, questions for discussion and a list of readings and audio-visual resources are suggested under the following topics: (1) Issues before the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, (2) The Worldwide Population Explosion, (3) International Control of the Seabed and Ocean Floor, and (4) The United Nations and this Beleaguered Earth - the Wider Issues. Also given are pointers for planning the format of such programs or discussion sessions. (BL)

THE UNITED NATIONS AND THIS BELEAGUERED EARTH

a
discussion
guide

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
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American Association of University Women
United Nations Association of the United States of America

Setting the scene

New words have entered our vocabularies in recent years, and old ones have taken on new meanings and import. Environment-ecology-biosphere-recycling-population explosion are the latest subjects of party conversation and of group programs and action. Much exciting work is being done in the name of this new movement to preserve our environment; several voluntary organizations have taken the leadership in calling for changes in everyday ways of doing things, in our laws, and in our fundamental values. To date, however, most of this action has centered on the domestic scene, on what we as individual citizens could do in our own homes and communities.

Now the time has come to look beyond the local and even the national concern to realize that domestic and international problems are interrelated and that long-term solutions to many of the crises we face demand international, as well as local and national, action.

The United Nations recognizes this interrelationship of the domestic and the global and is addressing itself to the problems it poses. Increasingly, UN assistance projects are focusing on environmental problems. A major UN conference is planned for June 1972 in Stockholm to decide on concrete steps the international community can take to come to grips with such problems as the destruction of our seas by ocean dumping, our lack of knowledge of the long-term effects on human life of air and water pollution and our unplanned dissipation of irreplaceable natural resources. Another international conference will be held by the UN in 1973 to discuss the possibility of placing our last common resource — the seabed and the oceans — under some form of international jurisdiction and control.

The U.S. government will take a leadership role in these major international conferences and will be called upon to pay a fair share of the costs of any international actions that are decided upon. But Americans, to date, have thought very little about the problems these conferences will discuss and especially about the nature and degree of U.S. involvement in any new international agencies or programs that result. It is time Americans, and especially articulate Americans in leadership positions, began thinking about the international dimensions of the environmental crisis, about the role the UN is now playing and should play in the future, and about how and to what extent their own government should participate.

This discussion guide is designed to contribute to this dialogue.

Program pointers

Here is a plan for one meeting — or two — or four — adaptable for use by a study group whose focus is the environment, or one whose major concern is the United Nations and/or international relations.

Whatever length program you are planning, you must begin with an understanding of the subject matter. The starred (*) books in the bibliography section are your "core" readings and include sufficient material for one overview meeting. For an in-depth approach, over a number of meetings, supplement the "core" readings with the additional suggested materials.

A single meeting can be handled in any number of ways. One member can serve as discussion leader, a second as resource person. Or the same person can do both jobs. Or the "core" readings can be parcelled out among several members who will then serve as a panel of "experts". Whatever the format, however, the most interesting meeting is the one that breaks up the presentations with discussion questions and allows lots of membership participation.

If you are planning a series of meetings, consider devoting one to the UN's 1972 Environment Conference, a second to population questions, and a third to the issue of international control of the seabed. Or you can schedule several meetings on each topic, bringing in relevant slides, films and outside speakers.

You'll probably find we've included more discussion questions than you're able to use. This was done to give you a choice, an opportunity to pick those issues that are of particular interest to your own members. You may want to restate the questions in your own words, or to add new ones. Anything you do to involve your membership or relate an issue to your local problems and interests can only improve your program.

Issues before the 1972 United Nations

Questions for discussion

Alarmed over the global implications of the abuse of the human environment, the UN is planning a Conference on the Human Environment to be held in Stockholm, Sweden, in June 1972.

1. What do you think UN leaders hope to accomplish by promulgating an international declaration of environmental rights? Do you see it as an inspiration? As a provoker of thought and discussion? As a basis for new domestic and/or international law? Or merely as another empty statement that will probably be ignored?
2. How deeply should the United Nations involve itself in world-wide conservation efforts? Should it be given powers to designate and protect threatened species? To set up gene banks to preserve animal and plant species facing extinction? What about international cultural resources (Venice, Angkor Wat, the Egyptian Pyramids, etc.)? Should the UN establish a World Heritage Foundation for their protection?
3. Should the UN set up new international machinery to deal with the problems of world-wide pollution? Are stronger domestic controls needed first before international machinery can be effective? What kinds of domestic controls would be needed in the U.S. to dovetail with strengthened international agencies and programs?
4. Should the powers of an international agency or agencies in the environmental field be limited to monitoring pollutants and publishing the findings? To research into the causes of pollution and measures of prevention? To training young people in techniques of environmental protection? To setting international standards? To enforcing international rules and regulations in the pollution field? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of these?
5. If the UN and its agencies are given enforcement powers, UN members may have to go along with decisions they do not like. Do you feel that the U.S. is prepared to accept limits on its sovereignty in the interest of a cleaner environment? Are American industries, consumers, politicians, willing to accept internationally set standards? Should they be?
6. A cleaner environment costs money. Even in a rich society like our own the question of who is to pay is constantly with us. Imagine the dilemma faced by poorer nations, struggling to industrialize, many with per capita incomes of under \$100 a year. Can we blame the leader of a developing country who recently told a UN meeting that his people would welcome a little pollution if it meant industrial growth? After all, when our country was in the process of industrializing, we didn't have to adhere to costly international standards. Should the richer countries offer to help the less developed nations bear the costs of building anti-pollution measures into their new factories, hydroelectric facilities, etc.? How? Would you, for example, favor increasing the amount of foreign aid to a project which incorporates anti-pollution devices? Would you favor granting trade preferences to products of new non-polluting factories? What other ways can you think of to encourage pollution prevention measures on the part of newly industrializing nations?

Conference on the Human Environment

Readings and Audio-Visual Resources

* **THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT: NEW CHALLENGE FOR THE UN**, United Nations Publication No. OPI/433, United Nations, New York 10017, February 1971, 16 pp. 20¢. An overview of current UN programs in the environment field and a report on plans and proposals for its 1972 Stockholm Conference.

ENVIRONMENT, Program kit prepared by the United Nations Association of the USA, 833 UN Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017, 1971, \$2.50. A collection of substantive articles and program suggestions on the international aspects of the environmental crisis.

"A message to our 3½ billion neighbors on planet Earth: S.O.S. Environment". Special issue of UNESCO Courier, July 1971. 36 pp. 50¢, UNIPUB, P.O. Box 433, New York, N.Y. 10016. Describes imaginative programs to fight pollution on three continents. A final article "Industrialization Without Pollution" discusses this crucial dilemma of the developing world.

"The UN's Role in the Preservation of the Environment", by Barbara Ward. May/June 1971, Reprint from Vantage, U.S. Catholic Conference, Division of UN Affairs, 323 East 47th St., New York, N.Y. 10017, 5 pp. 25¢. A short but provocative account of the many ways the UN can and must become involved in worldwide environmental problems.

"Mortgaging the Old Homestead", Lord Ritchie-Calder, Reprint from Foreign Affairs, Council on Foreign Relations, 58

East 68th Street, New York, N.Y. 10021, January 1970, 75¢. A highly readable look at the damage to the world's environment wrought by man in his ignorance and thoughtlessness.

"Three Reports on Global Pollution and the United Nations", Saturday Review, Aug. 7, 1971, 50¢. Key article "UN as Policeman" by Richard Gardner looks at what the 1972 Conference might accomplish, if successful.

"The Ecology Backlash", Stanley Johnson, Article in VISTA, United Nations Association, 833 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017, Sept.-Oct. 1970, \$1. Explains why some people in the developing world view Western efforts to control pollution as a new form of colonialism, and what can be done to overcome these suspicions.

U.S. National Report on the Human Environment, Department of State Publication 8588, June 1971, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, 53 pp., 40¢. Official U.S. Report to the UN outlining our national environmental problems, and topics we feel the 1972 Conference should consider.

Slide Show, This is Your Earth, Produced by UNESCO, 1971, 50 slides, written commentary and record, runs approximately ½ hour, \$15 from UNIPUB, P.O. Box 433, New York, N.Y. 10016. A general introduction to the threats posed by man, throughout the world, to the biosphere we all share. Does not show what the UN is doing about them.

* core reading

The Worldwide P

Questions for discussion

Recent United Nations studies have shown that at present growth rates the world population will increase from 3.5 billion to 6.5 billion by the year 2,000.

1. Do you agree that population growth, at present rates, is a threat to world peace in the coming decades? Or do you feel that the world can manage to feed and support its increasing numbers if it makes a serious effort to do so?
2. What relationship do you see between population growth and economic development? Between population growth and the revolution of rising expectations? How do you feel about the charge that racism is the real reason leaders of the rich, white nations are advocating population control for countries whose inhabitants are mainly of the black and brown races?
3. Assuming that you accept the need for worldwide population control, what would be the most effective way for Americans to encourage its practice? By our own example? By direct bilateral aid to other countries that request it? By channeling our aid through the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each method?
4. Should we try a carrot-and-stick approach, threatening a cut-off of other forms of economic assistance if population programs aren't included in the package? Would such an approach be more appropriate coming from the United Nations than from the United States? Or is it inappropriate, no matter who suggests it?
5. What kinds of population assistance would you like to see the United Nations give — Advice on changing national laws to encourage family planning? Help in establishing nation-wide (or regional, or local) family planning clinics? Distribution of contraceptives? Research into new contraceptive devices and techniques and their local effectiveness? Training of medical and paramedical personnel for family planning programs?

(P.S. Responding to requests from governments, the UN is now doing all of these things and more. But in a limited way.)

ulation Explosion

Readings and Audio-Visual Resources

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR THIS BELEAGUERED EARTH: POPULATION, American Association of University Women, 2401 Virginia Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037, 1971, 18 pp. Single copies available free to AAUW members from the program office. Background data, discussing questions and resources focusing on primarily the domestic aspects of the population problem.

POPULATION, RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT: ISSUES IN HUMAN ECOLOGY, Paul and Ann Ehrlich, W. H. Freeman, 1970, 383 pp., \$8.95. "The first comprehensive detailed analysis of the worldwide crisis of overpopulation and the resulting demands on food, resources and the environment."

"Population" by Valerie K. Oppenheimer, Headline Series, June 1971, Foreign Policy Association, 345 E. 46th St., New York, N.Y. 10017, 95 pp., \$1. Explains the dangers of an expanded population to both developing and industrialized nations. Family planning programs, though essential, are viewed as only part of the solution.

HUMAN FERTILITY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A CHALLENGE TO SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, United Nations Publication No. E.71.II. A.12, United Nations, New York, 10017, 1971, 140 pp., \$2.50. This comprehensive report, prepared for the UN Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development, assesses the impact of accelerating population on the economies of developing countries, evaluates existing family planning efforts, and puts forth a five year program of UN aid in the population field.

* THE POPULATION DILEMMA, Philip Hauser, Ed., The American Assembly, 2nd edition, 1969, 211 pp., \$2.45. A compila-

tion of authoritative articles on the problem, worldwide, and its scientific and sociological solutions.

THE ECONOMIC EFFECT OF DECLINING FERTILITY IN LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, Gavin W. Jones, An occasional paper of the Population Council, 245 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017, Feb. 1969, 30 pp. Free. A clear explanation of the effects of population growth on economic development.

OVERCOMING WORLD HUNGER, Clifford Hardin, Ed., American Assembly, 1969, 177 pp., \$1.95. Population control is shown as an essential component of any effort to feed the world's growing numbers. Other solutions, such as expanded food production and aid from abroad, are also explored.

Population Bulletin, Published six times a year by the Population Reference Bureau, 1755 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, 50¢ a copy. Each issue focuses on a specific topic. Recent titles include "Sweden: A Nation that Developed a set of Population Policies" (Nov. 1970, No. 4); "India: Ready or Not, Here they Come" (Nov. 1970, No. 5) and "Population and Resources: The Coming Collision" (June 1970, No. 2).

Film: The Problem is Life, Produced by the United Nations, Color, 28½ minutes. Rental for \$11, McGraw Hill-Contemporary Films, Princeton Rd., Hightstown, N.J. 08520, 828 Custer Ave., Evanston, Illinois 60202; or 1714 Stockton St., San Francisco, California 94133. Examines India's campaign to curb her population. We see how social pressures are used to convince illiterate villagers of the desirability of smaller families and vasectomies promoted as a method especially suited to Indian conditions.

* core reading

International Control of the

Questions for discussion

In 1967, Arvid Pardo, Ambassador of Malta, proposed to the UN that the resources of the sea and seabed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction be reserved as "the common heritage of all mankind," and the UN General Assembly agreed to this principle. Pardo called for the establishment of an international agency to regulate, supervise and control all ocean bed activities.

1. Do you agree that newly found seabed resources (oil, gold, manganese, etc.) should be reserved for mankind as a whole, or should they automatically become the property of the nation or mining company that finds them? Would you support the establishment of an international agency such as Pardo suggested?

2. If you think an international seabed resource authority is a good idea, what specific powers do you think it should have: Powers to set anti-pollution standards? To set aside zones for exploitation by future generations and/or for multinational operations? To collect royalties on behalf of the international community and turn them over to the UN for use in development projects? Should it have the right to fine nations or firms that refuse to adhere to its standards? To bar them from future seabed exploitation? (Keep in mind that no UN agency has ever been given such enforcement powers.) If you feel that the UN should be given these new powers, how would you justify your position?

3. The issue of what constitutes the "limits of national jurisdiction" is highly controversial. The old three mile limit has given way to twelve and recently some Latin American nations have claimed 200 miles. Should the international community accept these unilateral extensions of jurisdiction and go along with them, or should the UN's 1973 Conference on the Seabed and Ocean Floor require a uniform three or twelve mile limit for all nations and proclaim the area beyond the property of all mankind? How might we compensate those countries that feel threatened because they have no continental shelf (where most of the seabed's mineral resources are to be found) or whose prime mineral exports would face new major competition once seabed resources are exploited (Chile and her copper for example)?

Seabed and Ocean Floor

Readings and Audio-Visual Resources

*THE FUTURE OF THE OCEANS, Wolfgang Friedmann, Braziller, New York, 1971, 132 pp., \$2.45. A provocative introduction to the ecological and political challenges of the seabed. Describes in lay language the resources of the seabed, the newly developed technology for its exploitation, and efforts, to date, to bring the area under international control. The author is a strong advocate of an international oceanbed regime.

MARINE POLLUTION — POTENTIAL FOR CATASTROPHE, United Nations Publication OPI/444-06208, 1971, 24 pp., 20¢, United Nations Sales Section, United Nations, New York 10017. Describes the various pollutants that threaten the marine environment — their sources and the damage they produce. Concludes that the problem demands multidisciplinary solutions, coordinated by strengthened international machinery.

THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE BED OF THE SEA, 19th Report of the Com-

mission to Study the Organization of Peace, 866 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017, 1969, 30 pp., 50¢. A proposal and a rationale for international control of the seabed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.

Film: The Sixth Continent, Produced by the United Nations, 1969, Color, 28 minutes. Rental \$11 from Contemporary Films, McGraw Hill Book Co., Princeton Rd., Hightstown, N.J. 08520; 828 Custer Ave., Evanston, Illinois; or 1714 Stockton St., San Francisco, Calif. 94133. Intriguing, beautifully photographed introduction to the "new frontier" of the seabed and ocean floor. Astronaut/aquonaut Scott Carpenter and undersea explorer Jacques Picard introduce us to studies of dolphins and their sonar systems, the travels of the sub Ben Franklin as it explores the Gulf Stream and a Japanese "marine farm" where fish are cultivated as food crops.

• core reading



The United Nations and this beleaguered Earth-the wider issues

Questions for discussion

1. The extent of the UN's involvement in the environment field probably came as a surprise to you. Why do you suppose the average American knows so little about the positive accomplishments and concerns of the UN outside of the political realm? Do we perhaps have a stereotyped view of the world organization? Have we been focusing too much on its political accomplishments and failures and overlooking its record on the economic and social fronts? What can be done to change this stereotype?
2. Basic to the whole question of the role the UN is to play in meeting the environmental challenge is the issue of how much power it is to have and how much sovereignty member nations are willing to cede to it. Are there ways the UN can be strengthened without impinging on the national sovereignty of its members? Do you think UN agencies can effectively resolve the problems of our beleaguered environment if they must rely solely on their powers of persuasion? Or is it essential that they be given power to enforce their decisions? Would you be willing to see our country part with some of its sovereignty in the interest of a cleaner environment? In the interest of an equitable distribution of the resources of the seabed? What other causes might justify relinquishing pieces of our sovereignty to the international community?
3. In what ways could the U.S. government make greater use of the UN in resolving other problems in the economic and social fields? In the political field?

Readings

THE UNITED NATIONS: ISSUES IN UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY, No. 5, U.S. Department of State, 1970, 48 pp., \$1. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. An overview of all aspects of the work of the UN, with stress on issues of particular concern to the United States.

THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME — WHAT IT IS; WHAT IT DOES; HOW IT WORKS; WHY YOU SHOULD CARE, 1970, 14 pp., Free, UNDP, United Nations, N.Y. 10017. Basic factual and statistical introduction to the work of the UN in the development field.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION FOR THE OBSERVANCE OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS, 1971, 67 pp., 60¢, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washing-

ton, D.C. 20402. A compilation of thoughtful recommendations for strengthening the UN and U.S. participation in it; issued by a citizens' group headed by Henry Cabot Lodge.

THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE 1970's, United Nations Association of the U.S.A., 833 UN Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017, 1971, 88 pp., \$1.00. Provocative proposals for making the UN a more effective body by a panel of foreign policy experts, headed by Nicholas deB. Katzenbach.

VISTA, United Nations Association of the U.S.A., 833 UN Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017, bi-monthly, \$1 a copy, \$4 a year. Special 226 page issue, May/June 1970, "The United Nations at 25", \$2. Articles on every aspect of the UN's work, popularly written. The best way to keep up with the UN on a regular basis.

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A note to Discussion Participants

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